



**Your Strategy, Your Way.**

# **Global Strategy Summit**

Virtual edition 4

**MR. MOHAMMED SHAIK**

**Design Thinking for Strategy Formulation: Beyond Traditional Analysis**

**We hope you enjoy the presentation.**

**For any inquiries, please feel free to contact the CEO, Mr. Shaik Abdul Khadar, at +91 77997 9833, fruiStrategy Pvt. Ltd.**

# Design Thinking for Strategy Formulation Beyond Traditional Analysis

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# Blueprint

- Introduction
- Context
- The Forecast That Failed
- The Strategy Trap
- Strategy as a Design Challenge
- What Design Thinking Unlocks
- Real-World Application
- Designing the Future
- Q&A



# Introduction

I am a

- Product & Technology Leader
- Digital Transformation Executive
- AI Adoption Architect
- AI Change Management Leader
- Strategist
- Entrepreneur

# ⚠️ Disclaimer Before We Begin

This isn't a critique of any framework, process, or methodology you use today.

I'm not here to point fingers only to open minds.

My intention is simple:

To explore how we can modernize, evolve, and enhance the way we formulate strategy regardless of what approach you're using now.

That's it.

No judgment, just possibility.

# Core Narrative Arc

## The Strategic Illusion: Why Analysis Fails to Guide Bold Strategy

“Most strategic planning is just budget allocation with a spreadsheet. But real strategy is about making tough, imaginative choices in the face of ambiguity.” – *Roger Martin*

- Analysis is retrospective; it optimizes the known.
- It assumes data = insight, but strategy lives in the unknown.
- Strategy becomes risk-averse and status-quo affirming.

**Provocation:** What if analysis is actually the enemy of true strategy?

# The Mindset Shift: From Certainty to Curiosity

“Good product thinkers constantly discover what works. They don’t assume they know. They test and learn.” – *Teresa Torres*

- Design thinking encourages iterative learning.
- Instead of “What’s the answer?” ask “What’s worth exploring?”
- Strategic confidence should emerge *through* discovery, not before it.

**Core Message:** Strategy must be shaped by exploring desirability, feasibility, and viability, not only by calculating ROI.

# The Forecast That Failed

“January. A global supply chain company wraps up its annual strategy offsite.

Spreadsheets glow. KPIs are locked. Forecasts show 96% fulfillment precision.

Everyone nods. The board signs off. Confidence is high.

April. A Tier 2 supplier floods. Three weeks offline.

Small disruption? They think so.

May. Backlogs pile. Inventory misaligns. SLAs slip. Revenue tanks.

In the war room, the CEO asks the SVP of Strategy:

“Why didn’t we see this coming?”



# The Forecast That Failed

And the uncomfortable truth is:

**They had all the data.  
They just didn't ask the right questions.**

They optimized the past — not designed for the unknown.

Later, that leader said:

*“We were precise... but blind. Strategy wasn't wrong. It was incomplete.”*

# The Forecast That Failed

This isn't just one company. It's a pattern. Strategy today is brilliant at measuring, but poor at imagining.

Which leads us to the real question:

**What if the real problem isn't lack of analysis but the absence of design?**

# The Strategy Trap



*"In most boardrooms, strategy means analysis.*  
We gather data. Build dashboards. Craft forecasts.  
We turn the future into a spreadsheet.  
And if the numbers are clean, we feel safe.



But here's the trap:  
**Data only tells us what's already happened.**  
And yet, we use it to design what hasn't.



Strategy becomes a budgeting exercise in disguise.  
Scorecards become comfort blankets.  
And strategic plans? Beautifully flawed guesses.



We reward certainty and punish doubt.  
But real strategy starts where the data ends.

# Common Patterns of the Trap

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## **Overconfidence in the Known**

"If we can measure it, we can manage it."

➤ But in complex systems, *what matters most can't always be measured.*

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## **Blind Spots in Assumptions**

"Our model worked last year."

➤ Until one assumption quietly fails... and everything unravels.

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## **Slow, Defensive Planning Cycles**

"Let's revisit this next quarter."

➤ By then, the market has already moved.  
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# Strategy as a Design Challenge



"What if the real power of strategy isn't in precision – but in **possibility**?"



What if instead of asking '*What's most likely to happen?*', we asked: '*What's worth exploring?*'



That's where **Design Thinking** enters the picture.



It doesn't reject analysis – It completes it."

## The Strategy Reframe Lens



Signature  
Model:

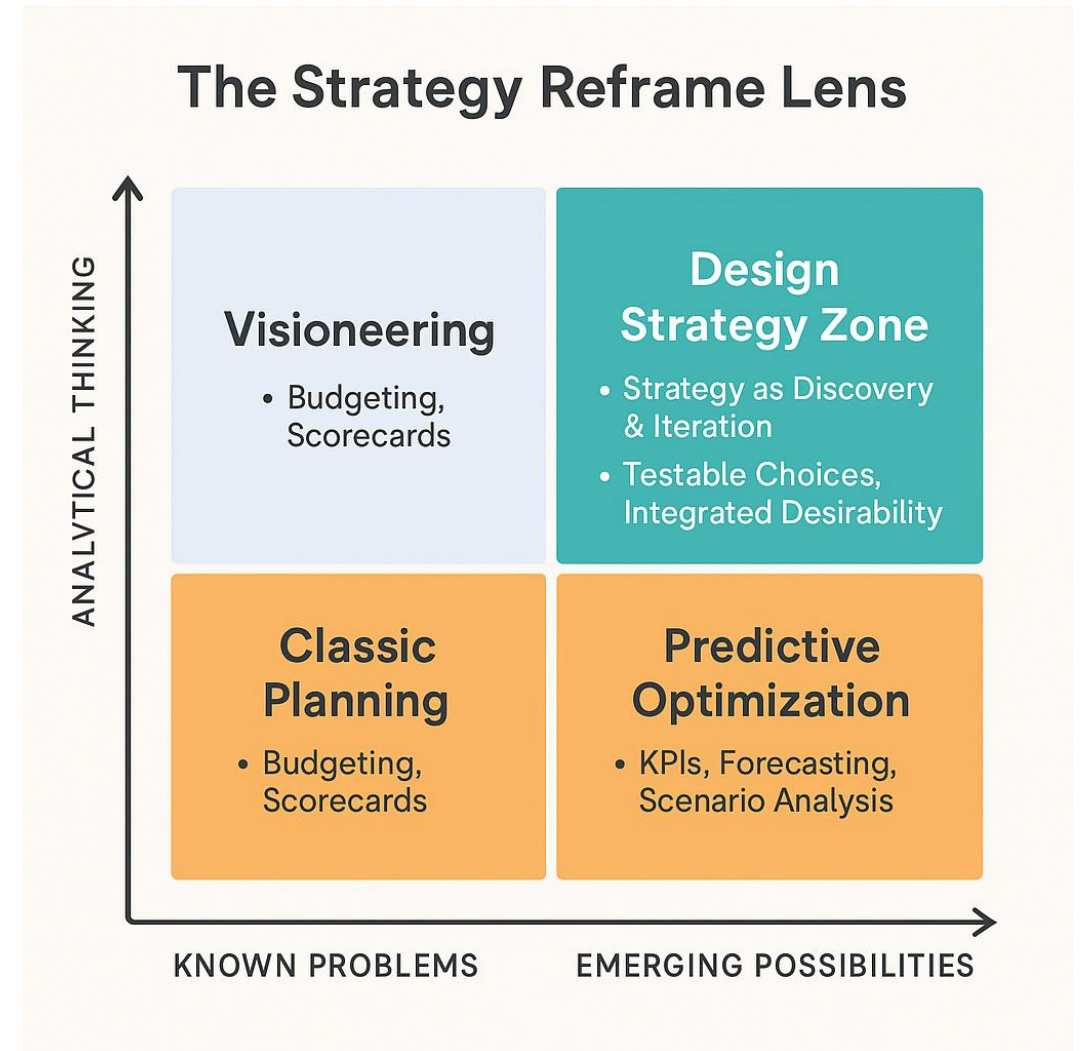
“The Strategy  
Reframe Lens”

From Prediction  
to Design. A  
New Lens for  
Strategic  
Leadership

# Walkthrough the Quadrants

## ◆ Quadrant I – Classic Planning *Budgeting, Scorecards, MBOs*

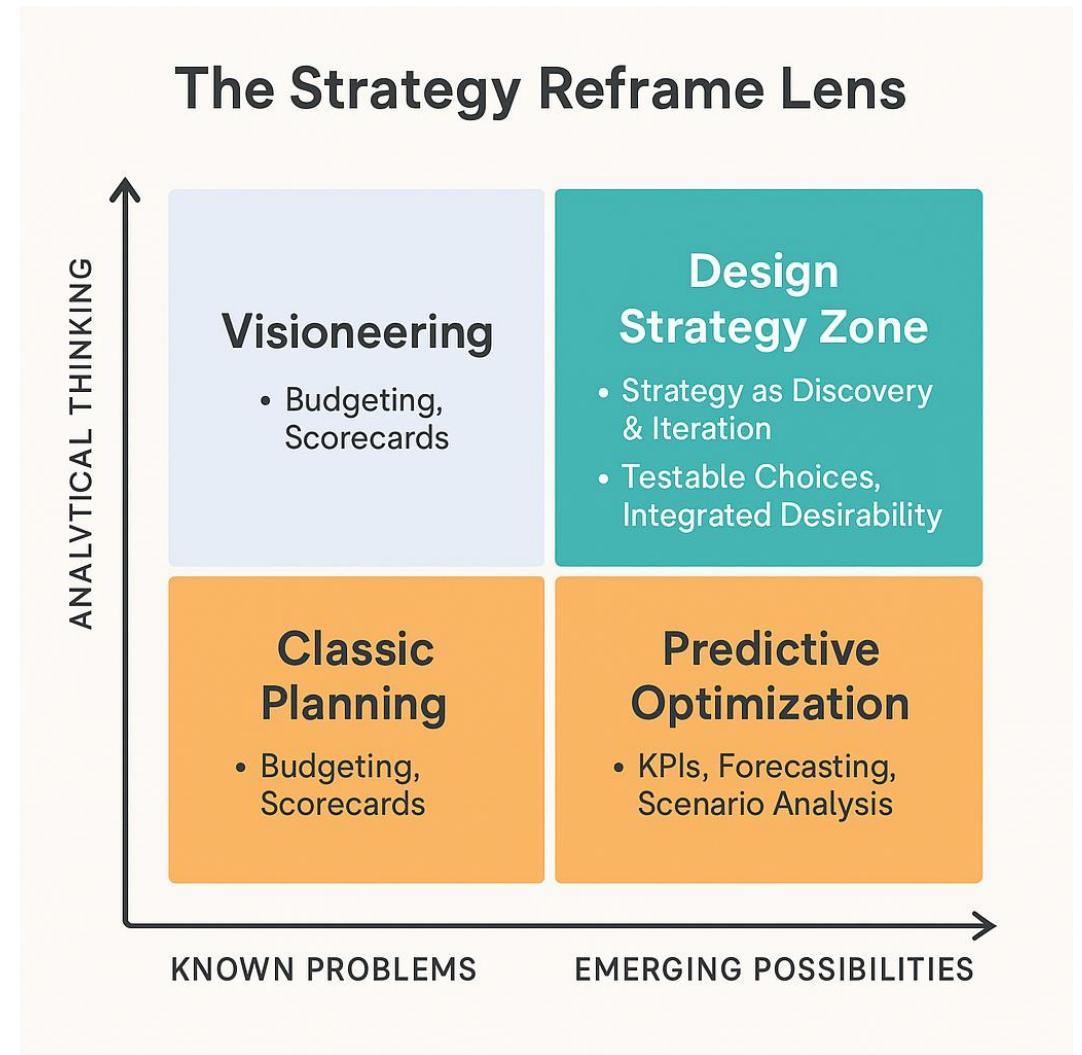
- Works in stable, linear systems
- Breaks under complexity



# Walkthrough the Quadrants

## ◆ Quadrant II – Predictive Optimization *AI forecasts, scenario trees, risk models*

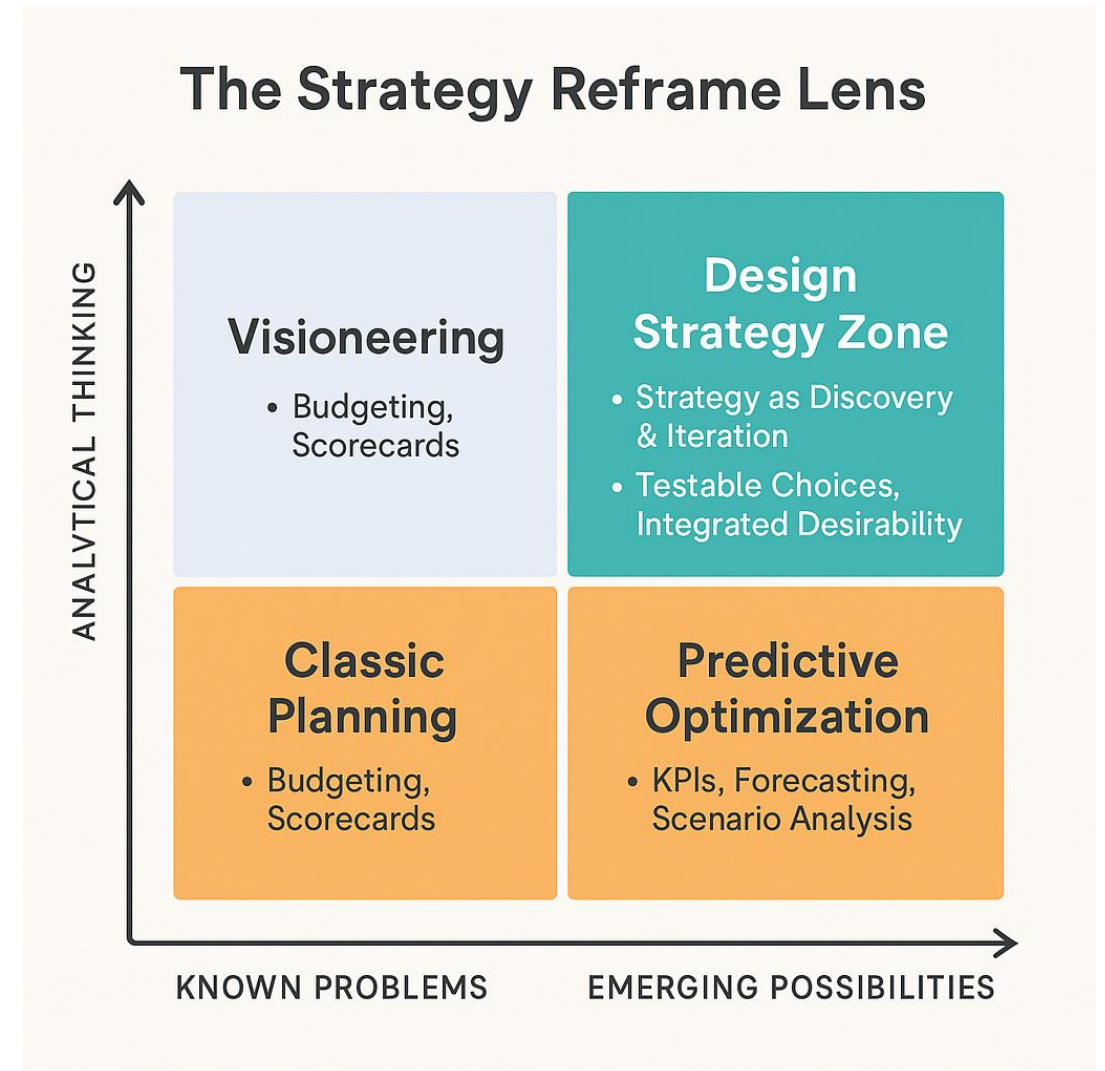
- Useful for operational efficiency
- Assumes the future = past patterns





# Walkthrough the Quadrants

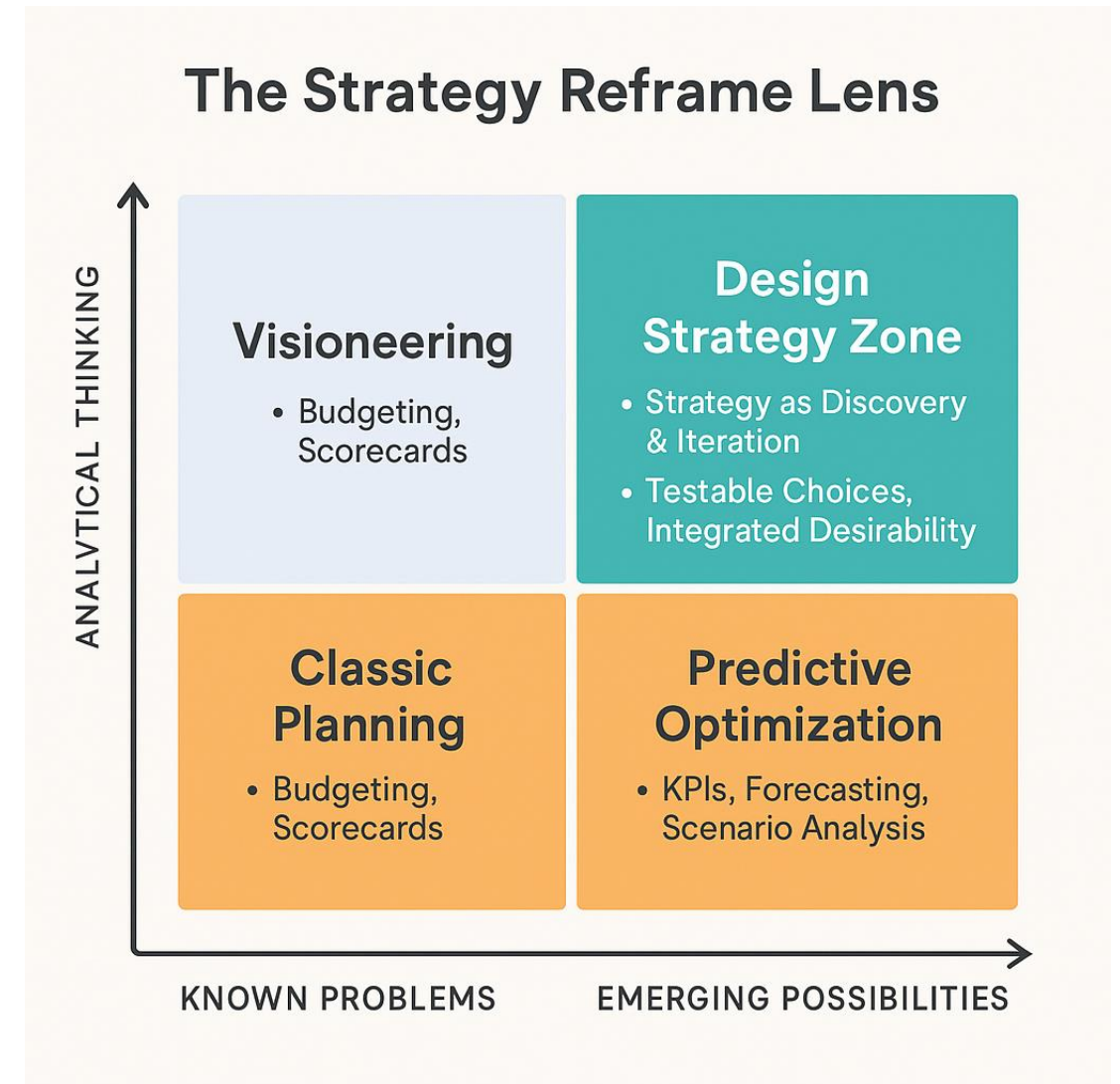
- ◆ **Quadrant III – Visioneering**  
*Blue-sky thinking, innovation labs*
- Inspires bold futures
- Often detached from real-world constraints



# Walkthrough the Quadrants

💡 **Quadrant IV – Design Strategy Zone**  
*Where Design Thinking meets Strategic Discipline*

- You explore what's desirable, feasible, and viable
- You test assumptions, not just set KPIs
- You make choices based on behaviour, not belief



# What Design Thinking Unlocks

- **Theme:** Design Thinking isn't soft — it's strategic. It brings the muscles traditional strategy lacks.
- “Design Thinking isn't about sticky notes.
- It's about sharpening strategy in ways analysis can't.”
- Here's what it unlocks:



## **Empathy → Strategic Insight**

- Data shows what people do. Empathy reveals why.
- Understand real behaviors, pain points, unmet needs
- Ground strategy in lived experiences — not just reports

## **Iteration → De-Risked Decision-Making**

- “Great strategy isn’t guessed — it’s tested.”
- Prototype choices before betting the company
- Learn fast, adjust faster — before the market forces you

## **Integration → Better Strategic Choices**

- Designers hold tension. Strategists resolve it.
- Embrace trade-offs (efficiency vs. resilience, growth vs. risk)
- Use creative tension to build better, not safer strategies

# Strategic Reframe in Action

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Theme: A real-world example showing how shifting from analysis to design thinking transformed strategic outcomes.

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Let's bring this to life.

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Here's a true story anonymized but you'll likely see your world in it.

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Context:

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A global logistics company – mature, efficient, deeply analytical.

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Their scorecards were immaculate.

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Yet for two years straight, they missed their on-time delivery targets in volatile markets – despite excellent planning.

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 Old Strategy Approach:

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Focused on optimizing historical shipping patterns

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KPIs were tied to forecast accuracy and fulfillment rates

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Root cause analyses blamed external disruptions

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They kept improving the model – but the outcomes didn't improve.

# The Strategic Reframe:

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Instead of asking ‘What’s broken in the supply chain?’, they asked: ‘What’s changing in the customer expectation?’

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🔍 They ran design interviews with warehouse managers, clients, and drivers

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🔗 They prototyped flexible routing options with live feedback

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🔄 They iterated based on behavior — not assumptions

# New Strategy Outcomes :

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Introduced a **dynamic delivery commitment model**

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Shifted from “on-time” to “on-demand with transparency”

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Built real-time feedback loops into planning cycles

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📈 Result:

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21% improvement in customer satisfaction

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17% reduction in fulfillment stress cost

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Strategy became *adaptive*, not reactive



# Designing the Future

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Theme: True strategic leadership is not about knowing the answers, it's about designing better strategies and long-term questions have been seen as a test of intellect the one with the sharpest model wins.

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But in today's world, resilience is not found in models.

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It's found in mindsets.

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● Traditional Strategy Asks:

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"What's the optimal plan?"

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But assumes the world is stable enough to  
~~execute it.~~

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🔗 Design-Led Strategy Asks:

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"What's worth testing? What's worth  
~~learning?~~

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And what bold choice can we make, even when  
we're unsure?"

# Closing Metaphor:



"Spreadsheets organize the past.



Design organizes the future."



Leaders of the next decade won't just optimize KPIs –



They'll shape new playbooks.



Not with confidence in prediction...



But with courage in curiosity.

# Call to Action:

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So, here's your challenge:

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Find one assumption in your strategy today that everyone takes for granted. And test it. Explore it. Reframe it.

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Not because it's wrong but because it hasn't been designed yet.

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The future won't reward those who knew the answer.

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It will reward those who knew how to ask better questions . And were bold enough to design new ones.

# Strategic Reframe Playbook

*A Step-by-Step Guide to Move Beyond Traditional Analysis*

# Playbook Big Picture

Phase	Objective	Mindset Shift
1. Sense	Challenge the current strategy logic	From certainty → to curiosity
2. Frame	Reframe the strategic problem	From problems → to possibilities
3. Discover	Surface insights through real-world engagement	From assumptions → to evidence
4. Prototype	Design and test bold choices	From planning → to experimenting
5. Integrate	Scale what works, revise what doesn't	From annual reviews → to continuous strategy

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# Step 1: Sense the Limits of Your Current Strategy

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**Goal:** Expose blind spots and fragility in your current strategic thinking

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**Instructions:**

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Review last year's strategic plan

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Highlight assumptions that *didn't hold up*

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Ask: *What surprised us? What did we not see coming?*

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Invite cross-functional critiques (especially from frontline teams)

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**Tool:** "Failure Reflection Canvas"

**Mindset Shift:** Strategy begins where confidence ends

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# Step 2: Reframe the Strategic Challenge

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**Goal:** Turn narrow goals into design-worthy challenges

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**Instructions:**

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Replace “How do we hit 95% on-time delivery?” with  
➤ “How might we design a delivery model that thrives in disruption?”

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Surface **tensions** (e.g., speed vs. resilience, scale vs. quality)

Use “How Might We” framing to open up strategic space

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**Tool:** Reframing Ladder (zoom out → zoom in)

**Mindset Shift:** Strategy is about *possibility space*, not problem solving



# Step 3: Discover Real-World Insights

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**Goal:** Replace internal assumptions with external truths

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**Instructions:**

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Conduct discovery interviews with customers, partners, frontline ops

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Use observation over opinion: *What do people do, not say?*

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Map behaviors, pain points, workarounds, and unmet needs

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**Tool:** Strategic Empathy Map

**Mindset Shift:** Great strategy listens more than it plans

# Step 4: Prototype Bold Strategic Choices

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**Goal:** Design testable, high-leverage strategic options

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**Instructions:**

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Translate insights into strategic prototypes:

► New business models, value propositions, or operating rhythms

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Pilot the riskiest assumptions at small scale

Measure not just success but *learning velocity*

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**Tool:** Strategy Prototype Canvas

**Mindset Shift:** Treat strategy like product prototype it

# Step 5: Integrate & Iterate Continuously

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**Goal:** Move from one-time strategy to a living system

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**Instructions:**

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Embed weekly/bi-weekly learning loops into strategy discussions

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Evolve scorecards to include **leading indicators of learning**

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Institutionalize feedback across org levels

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**Tool:** Strategic Learning Loop

**Mindset Shift:** Strategy is not a moment. It's a motion.

# Example: PayPal Expanding into Emerging Markets

## □ Strategic Challenge:

“How should PayPal expand sustainable payment adoption in underserved, cash-heavy economies?”

## **Step 1: Define the Strategic Choice (Roger Martin Style)**

Roger Martin says:

Strategy is not planning it's making **integrated, mutually reinforcing choices**.

Let's apply that:

### **1.What is our winning aspiration?**

→ Make PayPal the default digital wallet in emerging markets.

### **2.Where will we play?**

→ Focus on tier-2/3 cities in India, Philippines, and Kenya.

### 3. How will we win?

→ Outcompete cash by making PayPal more **intuitive, trustable, and context-relevant** than local alternatives.

### 4. What capabilities must be in place?

→ Localized UX, offline-to-online transaction flow, merchant incentives, KYC simplicity.

### 5. What management systems are required?

→ Feedback loops from users and micro-merchants, lean policy enablement, agile product delivery teams.

## Step 2: Apply Design Thinking to Discover & Validate

Design Thinking pushes us to **learn from the ground up**, not just from HQ dashboards.

### Empathize

- Teams conduct field research in rural India and Manila slums.
- They observe: People don't trust QR codes. Many phones are shared among family. Merchants avoid digital payments due to settlement delays.

### Define

Reframe the strategic challenge:

*“How might we make PayPal feel as trustworthy and tangible as cash — without requiring tech literacy?”*

## 💡 Ideate

Cross-functional teams brainstorm:

- A “Digital Stamp Card” metaphor using WhatsApp UI
- PayPal Lite → Works on 2G, no app installation
- Trusted Agent Program: Local shopkeepers double as KYC/Onboarding assistants

## 🔍 Prototype & Test

- Launch PayPal Lite MVP in 3 localities in Tamil Nadu
- A/B test onboarding via QR vs. Trusted Agent
- Observe real behavior, not just reported preference



- **Step 3: Integrate Back into Strategy Loop (Roger Martin Again)**
- After discovery and testing:
- **Where to Play** now shifts to communities with strong shopkeeper networks
- **How to Win** evolves into a trust-by-proxy model: low-tech UX + local human trust
- New capabilities identified: Local agent training, micro-incentives, real-time fraud alerts in regional languages
- Management systems updated: Weekly field feedback → strategic inputs, not just product feedback

# ★ Final Impact

- This approach:
- Avoids launching a “globalized” UX in a market where it would fail
- Accelerates adoption through **context-sensitive innovation**
- Reinforces strategy through real-world behavior
- Connects *Design Thinking's human empathy* with *Strategy's bold choice-making*

# Executive Takeaway

Strategy without empathy is blind.

- Design without direction is scattered.
- But when combined — they help us choose boldly and design wisely.

# The End



## Final Thoughts

Don't wait for the future to  
validate your plan

Design a strategy that discovers  
the future, one decision at a time.



## Thank You



## Q & A